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**DECIDING TO INTERVENE IN SUPPORT OF PEACE OPERATIONS:  
SERVING THE NATIONAL INTEREST**

**BY**

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**A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY**

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## ABSTRACT

Title: Deciding to Intervene in Support of Peace Operations: Serving the National Interest

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Peace Operations are complex, highly subjective and difficult to "win" missions. The way that Peace Operations are addressed by nations or multinational bodies is paramount to their success, but often leads to a failure to achieve desired goals. Nations must clearly define their goals prior to intervention and not lose track of assigned objectives. What often sidetracks otherwise noble intervention is conflicting or ambiguous goals, leading to inept half measures. Critical analysis of a proposed Peace Operation is required prior to commitment. This paper attempts to provide some constructive critical analysis which would benefit organizations contemplating Peace Operations.

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Commander William K. McIntire entered the Navy after graduating from the United States Merchant Marine Academy. He has accumulated over 5,000 hours of flight time in fixed wing aircraft both afloat and ashore. His most recent assignment was as Commanding Officer, Fleet Logistics Support Squadron 53, flying C-130T aircraft in support of fleet operations worldwide. He also holds a current U.S. Coast Guard license as a Third Mate, unlimited tonnage upon oceans.

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## INTRODUCTION

Intervention in the Cold War era was often in response to countering the expansion of communism. The Marshall Plan, the Truman Doctrine, Korea, Vietnam, Cuba and the Soviets in space all were part of a zero sum game the United States played with the former Soviet Union. The threat of military force backed every intervention, even if it was not a military intervention. The current national strategy involves intervention for the enlargement of democracy as well as to maintain the security of the United States and to further America's economic interests through development of free markets.<sup>1</sup> The problem in the world today is that, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States has no clear-cut threat on which to base its actions, but a host of disruptions to regional peace. The demise of the Soviet Union uncovered some of these disruptions involving nationalistic sentiment. Because there is no longer a threat of a Soviet invasion in Europe, other disruptions have elicited a response simply because armed forces are available.

Political and security concerns, such as the intervention in Haiti, can explain the United States' action in some cases. Although questions abound about the legitimacy of the United States involvement in Haiti, the loss of border control from refugee flows is a concern of national security. The default on loans to Haiti made by foreign governments, and the Monroe Doctrine establishing this hemisphere as the United States' playing field tend to legitimize intervention in Haiti. Other areas of the world where the United States has intervened may not be so clear. A military force initiated a humanitarian intervention in Somalia. Was this appropriate? In the former Yugoslavia the United States, along with the North Atlantic Treaty Alliance (NATO) and the United Nations, is trying to broker a peace in the region. Democracy involves the principle of equality of rights, opportunity, and treatment.<sup>2</sup> Can we build a democracy in the regions of the former Yugoslavia with nations that are on a determined quest for ethnic purity? What are the ground rules the United States should establish before considering intervention in a region? These are all questions with no easy answers.

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<sup>1</sup> President, Document, "A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement," (February 1995) p. i.

<sup>2</sup> Webster's Third New International Dictionary, ed. Philip B. Gove, (Springfield, 1986), s.v. "democracy."

With the United States now the only Global Superpower, the question is: what role should it play in international events? Without the threat from the Soviet Union, many have called for a reduction of America's military capability and a reduction in the expense of maintaining the most capable military force in the world. With the significant threats that do remain, the United States, the President, Congress and the Department of Defense are all attempting to define the specific threats to national security. Also being sought are the realistic responses required and the appropriate size of force to deal with those threats. While defining a role for the military and attempting to establish a rationale for maintaining a capable military force, the armed forces of the United States are increasingly becoming involved in operations other than war, particularly peacekeeping, peacemaking, peace enforcement and humanitarian intervention. The problem today is that it is difficult to equate the military requirements in these types of missions with traditional military requirements, which have been measured in terms of readiness for the past fifty years. Some of today's conflicts involve the creation or survival of nations of ethnic groups, which has proved to be an extremely emotional subject for the participants.

Before we become embroiled in a discussion of intervention and its various forms, we should define some terms that I will use, and which have become confused since the end of the Cold War. One can argue where one type of peace operation ends and another begins, but I will give the meaning I subscribe to the following terms: peacekeeping, peacemaking, peace enforcement, peace building and humanitarian intervention. Although it is important to distinguish between these various aspects of intervention, defining the terms is simply a reference point for their future use in this paper. For my purposes, peacekeeping is an operation that provides a willingness to help maintain peace on the part of the intervention force and a willingness to be helped on the part of the disputants. All parties must cooperate; however the disputants make the final decisions. Peacemaking serves to negotiate, mediate or enforce a solution to a crisis. Cooperation remains a factor, with the disputants willingly participating. Peace enforcement is a more severe form of intervention where more heavily armed troops than would be necessary in other peace operations take punitive action using offensive measures as necessary to restore



peace.<sup>3</sup> Peace building is the process of repairing the failed infrastructure that gave rise to conflict or social tension, so as to sustain peace independently in a post conflict stage. Peace building may follow peacekeeping with a strengthening of the democratic process, development of respect for human rights and resolving causes of humanitarian suffering.<sup>4</sup> Finally humanitarian intervention is the threat or use of force by one or more states against another state or organization, in order to terminate the abuse of human beings.<sup>5</sup> This abuse can be intentional or incidental to other circumstances. The salient point is that humanitarian intervention seeks to relieve human suffering.

With events from past generations fueling the fires of conflict, and the real or perceived survival of nations at stake, the will of the people involved becomes a powerful force. The outcomes of traditional conflicts using armed force can be forecast based on industrial and military might. While an overwhelming distribution of force may indicate the outcome of traditional wars, this does not hold true for contests where the will of the people is overwhelmingly supportive of a conflict where their future is at stake. The value of the stakes involved has a direct bearing on the popular will. As the stakes change, become greater or lesser, so does popular will.<sup>6</sup> Military might alone cannot forecast the successful outcome of conflicts that originate from peace enforcement missions or unwelcome humanitarian intervention, such as Somalia, Bosnia or Haiti. What the people think about a conflict, whether true or not, can effect the level of popular support within a region of conflict. In the past Vietnam was an example of the will of people overcoming superior force and, more recently, Somalia, where superior American firepower was subordinate to the superior will of Somali thugs.

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<sup>3</sup> Alan James, "Internal Peacekeeping," Peacekeeping and the Challenges of Civil Conflict Resolution, ed. David A. Charters, (New Brunswick: University of New Brunswick, 1994), 5. In addition to this reference, the following were used in compiling these definitions: Richard M. Connaughton, "Command, Control and Coalition Operations," Military Implications of United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, ed. William H. Lewis, (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, Institute for National Strategic Studies, 1993), 11-12. James S. Sutterlin, "Military Force in the Service of Peace," Aurora Papers 18, (Ottawa: The Canadian Center for Global Security, 1993), 23. And, Hilaire McCoubrey and Nigel D. White, International Law and Armed Conflict, (Brookfield, VT: Dartmouth Publishing Company, 1992), 179.

<sup>4</sup> James S. Sutterlin, "Military Force in the Service of Peace," Aurora Papers 18, (Ottawa: The Canadian Center for Global Security, 1993), 13.

<sup>5</sup> Tom J. Farer, "An Inquiry into the Legitimacy of Humanitarian Intervention," Law and Force in the New International Order, eds. Lori F. Damrosch and David J. Scheffer, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), 185-186.

For whatever reason, the United States is a compassionate nation. While the world may sit back and watch, we are prone to jump in to stop suffering. Perhaps because the United States is a nation with so much wealth, we have been willing to share to some degree. Although we are a powerful country, we do not carry centuries of unresolved conflict into world events. However, without guidelines on the military's role in operations other than war, there may be a tendency to jump in to stop human suffering without having properly assessed the causes of the conflict. Perhaps precisely because of our brief history, we do not think historically. We forget that the rest of the world has not subscribed to the adage "forgive and forget."

Therefore, while we may desire to limit suffering, especially among innocent civilians, there has to be vision and logic applied, not emotion, when deciding to intervene. The United States alone does not have the wealth to be the world's conscience. Intervention must be based on a carefully considered policy, not impulsive charity. Countering a hostile threat, in defense of national interests, is quite different from assuming the responsibility for world peace.<sup>7</sup> While with the former we must act swiftly and with a credible force, with the latter we must follow a policy with vision. The sooner we develop the vision the better, because in all probability traditional threats to our national security and vital interests are limited, if they exist at all anymore. Past enemies of the Twentieth Century are now allies and the arch nemesis, the Soviet Union, exists no longer.

Although we are a charitable nation, that does not mean we are willing to be the deep pocket relieving every event of human suffering. Overall the United States is a pragmatic nation. We see that the people of the world have to take responsibility for their own action -- or inaction. There are limits to the charity of the American people, and it is becoming increasingly more common to see calls to fix our own problems before we solve the world's problems. Humanitarian intervention is expensive, with no visible rewards for the American people. While Americans are benevolent, benevolence clearly does not extend to include the blood of fellow citizens, when vital interests are not at stake. Humanitarian

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<sup>6</sup> Robert H. Wagner, "The Causes of Peace," Stopping the Killing: How Civil Wars End, ed. Roy Licklider, (New York: New York University Press, 1993), 247.

<sup>7</sup> Edward LeRoy Long, Jr., "Legitimate Force," Christian Century, January 5-12 1994, 5.

intervention is political in nature and the American public has not shown great willingness to pay the price for such intervention.<sup>8</sup>

Perhaps our apprehension of intervention is that, increasingly, Americans do not have the answers required to relieve suffering, conflict, or war. Therefore, there is little or no control over the situation, its prospect for resolution, or its outcome. When the cause of suffering is political, the consequences for relieving it become political. War, of greater or lesser form, was the cause of suffering in all recent humanitarian and peacekeeping efforts in which the United States has been involved. Ending the war requires settlement of political questions that caused the war.<sup>9</sup> Whether it is Somalia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Iraq, or Haiti the political question has been one of power and territory; who has it and who controls it are the salient questions.

Humanitarian intervention invariably leads to political intervention to fix the ills that created the conditions in the first place. The strong involving themselves in the affairs of the weak is not new in international politics. However, because the answers to the power and territory questions are complex, and the questions are clouded by decades or even centuries of suffering in competition for a political or military solution, the United States often cannot intervene unilaterally. The United States, powerful as it is, does not have the credibility to unilaterally intervene since it was not present at the inception of the conflict and has not lived through the conflict. Thus, while the United States may not desire to intervene alone it can, or world opinion can, compel the United Nations (or other multinational organizations) to intervene. Yet the United Nations only reflects the will of some of its members, and while the United Nations Security Council may authorize action, it falls on the power of individual states to carry out any action.<sup>10</sup>

Individual states becoming involved in humanitarian or conflict resolution efforts today involves risks. In international conflicts, states are more apt to choose sides and the world community generally

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<sup>8</sup> Michael Mandelbaum, "The Reluctance to Intervene," Foreign Policy, 95 (Summer 1994): 4.

<sup>9</sup> Mandelbaum 4.

<sup>10</sup> Mandelbaum 12-13.

knows where everyone else stands on an issue. Domestic conflicts, like the one in Bosnia, may be more difficult to solve than international ones due to the possibility of intervention from the international community. Outside support, or potential outside support, for one of the combatants makes it difficult to arrange a condition where the combatants feel unable to improve on current conditions by continued fighting. Therefore, at least one of the combatants may prefer to continue the war rather than consider unfavorable conditions to end the war.<sup>11</sup>

The world community cannot solve many of today's problems to everyone's satisfaction. In nationalist issues, giving every distinct group its own state is territorially impossible. The earth has finite land; move a border to give to one nation and you have taken it away from another who may fight for it. In addition, it would lead to an international community so fractured that there would be limited international consensus and the United Nations and organizations like it would be useless.<sup>12</sup> We must explore peaceful political compromises when possible, otherwise, to achieve a solution, it may be necessary for one party to defeat another militarily. Many Westerners would find this distasteful. They believe that through peaceful negotiation we can solve any problem -- after all we are all part of the human race. Those who would oversimplify differences overlook inconsistencies in the values among the human race. A Saturday stoning in the town square is not in vogue in Western cultures.

Frequently called into question is the relevance to national interest of promoting democracy abroad. In promoting democracy the United States hopes to foster peaceful resolution of conflicts and markets for trade. Among the reasons for the United States promoting democracy, especially in the Western Hemisphere, is that, by building trade with Latin American countries, the United States' borders are more secure.<sup>13</sup> Promoting democracies in other regions of the world is more difficult since it involves multinational cooperation and agreement. In many cases, the issue is not just what kind of government will take hold, but will the nation survive as a state or be forced into continual conflict. We need only to look at many areas in Eastern Europe to see this in action. Despite this, the United States has always

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<sup>11</sup> Wagner 263.

<sup>12</sup> Mandelbaum 8.

taken a world view in expanding its interests. In promoting democracy and stability, the doors of trade are open and world markets become available. Charges of isolationism against the United States were heard prior to World War II and the accusations are repeating themselves in the 1990s. However, as an island nation of sorts we have always sought world markets. We have not always been interventionist, but we really have never been isolationist. Promotion of a world order consistent with American economic, political, and ideological goals have always been in the American interest.<sup>14</sup> In any potential intervention, what the United States needs to address is: when it is worth building this democratic influence and when it is not?

### FORMING INTERVENTION

Intervention can take numerous forms. Although we have primarily addressed intervention where military force has become involved, intervention encompasses a considerably wider scope. Intervention can be purely political, economic, or humanitarian without the use of military forces. We often see military forces involved in intervention activities, perhaps for the simple reason that the military possesses the infrastructure to launch a humanitarian mission, for example. In addition to the various reasons that compel us to intervene, we can intervene by ourselves or in concert with our allies. The reason that we might choose to intervene in a situation with the support of allies is because in certain situations we may have no credibility to intervene unilaterally. Unilateral intervention should be reserved for situations that are especially critical to the United States, and impact in one way or another on our vital national interests. It is safe to say, and most would agree, that the risks are higher with unilateral intervention, therefore the stakes must be greater to unilaterally intervene. By the same token, it is not in our best interest to intervene just because there is multinational support; the intervention must serve the United States' interests. Before any intervention occurs, two questions must be resolved. First what are the limits to intervention, if any? Second does the intervention support a particular group; if so, which group? These questions are important, for, as we can see with regard to Somalia, the limits of

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<sup>13</sup> Tony Smith, "In Defense of Intervention," *Foreign Affairs*, 73 (November/December 1994): 37-38.

<sup>14</sup> Robert Kagan, "The Case for Global Activism," *Commentary*, September 1994, 41.

intervention were not clearly established beforehand. Increasing the level of intervention by a transition from a humanitarian role to a peace enforcement role was done without addressing the limits of the intervention. The second question is equally important and, with respect to the former Yugoslavia, intervention while trying to remain impartial causes confusion with regard to intentions.

## UNILATERAL INTERVENTION

As with any intervention, there is more than one side to a decision and all aspects of a decision must be carefully weighed to ensure that it supports the goals of the United States. While some espouse promotion of human rights and expansion of democracy, others argue that it is not the responsibility of the United States to police the world, and question the wisdom of a heavy reliance on a multilateral institution that can commit the United States.<sup>15</sup> Although the United States will not relinquish its right to intervene unilaterally, with the high costs of intervention and the evolution of regional powers, it will be in our best interests to intervene with the political and economic support of allies. Even as the lone superpower in the world today, there are limits on the power of the United States, especially within cultures that do not share our values. Espousing the virtues of democracy and human rights does not mean that it is in our best interest to correct the world's ills. Reserving intervention for those occasions where our support will enhance stability and support our values will ultimately benefit United States interests.<sup>16</sup> Madeleine K. Albright, the United States Ambassador to the United Nations, in a statement before the Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs of the House Appropriation Committee said:

...UN peacekeeping is not, in our view, a substitute for vigorous alliances and a strong national defense. When threats arise...we will choose the course of action that best serves our interests. We may act through the UN, we may act through NATO, we may act through a coalition, we may sometimes mix these tools, or we may act alone. But we will do whatever is necessary to defend the vital interests of the United States.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Smith 42.

<sup>16</sup> Smith 46.

<sup>17</sup> Madeleine K. Albright, Anthony Lake and Lieutenant General Wesley Clark, USA, "The Clinton Administration's Policy on Reforming Multilateral Peace Operations," DISAM Journal, 16 (Summer 1994): 42.

Certainly, public opinion is a factor in any intervention action. Politically, the president's reelection depends on supporting the desires of the American public. In a democracy, the state takes on the values of the citizens as a whole. If intervention is critical to the interests of the United States, the leaders should ensure the intervention is either brief or that the public supports the intervention for the long haul. Public opinion will require any American leader to articulate the interest served by fostering democracy abroad.<sup>18</sup>

The United States has shown that it will, under some conditions, intervene with force to advance the cause of human rights and democracy. With this backing, expectations have risen that multilateral organizations, like the United Nations and NATO would develop into formidable advocates of peace and democracy. If, as United States Secretary of State Warren Christopher has said, the violence in the former Yugoslavia is a test of how the world will handle ethnic and religious violence, then clearly the world has failed.<sup>19</sup> Placing labels on conflicts, such as "ethnic" or "religious" or even human rights abuses, is only acknowledging part of the problem, and an insignificant part at that. What every conflict of regional or global interest is about is power, who has it and against whom they use it. This is as true of events in Rwanda as it is in Bosnia or Haiti. While we may advocate peace, the belligerents may not be willing to accept the price of peace -- loss of power. Unilateral intervention can be quite expensive in these cases.

## **MULTINATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

Individual governments have been unwilling to intervene in erupting conflicts around the world and instead have given multinational institutions the responsibility to focus on peacekeeping and peace enforcement capabilities. Governments have not, however, given these multinational organizations the resources required to ensure success.<sup>20</sup> Not only are the resources to get the job done lacking, but the approach the United Nations, or any other state or multinational organization, takes to accomplish the peace enforcement role is in need of reevaluation. While the United Nations has enjoyed some success at

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<sup>18</sup> Smith 45.

<sup>19</sup> Smith 40-41.

<sup>20</sup> Lynn E. Davis, "Peacekeeping and Peacemaking After the Cold War," (Santa Monica: Rand, 1993), 2.

peacekeeping, it has failed at peace enforcement. Peace enforcement, forcing a peace on unwilling belligerents, by its very name requires impartial and possibly unlimited intervention, since it involves opposing sides still desiring to solve a problem using armed force.<sup>21</sup> The United Nations is incapable of this intervention unless its member states desire to intervene.

The Secretary General of the United Nations supports the creation of a rapid-deployment type force of 30,000 troops. Although the force could not counter major armies with sophisticated weapons, in lesser conflicts, force would act as a deterrent.<sup>22</sup> Although in theory this force may support the efforts of the United Nations, in reality a force of this type would serve little purpose, and the number of troops is irrelevant. A rapid-deployment force infers injecting the force in a peace enforcement role, where force is used to eliminate fighting. A larger force with limited capabilities, and unsophisticated weapons, would only mean increased risk of United Nations casualties. A rapid-deployment force thrust into action by a hastily called session of the Security Council of the United Nations means that peace enforcement forces would intervene in a situation where there was a call of action but no well thought out or achievable objective. On the other hand, if the belligerents had mutually called for intervention by the United Nations to broker an honest peace, there would not be the urgent need for a "rapid-deployment" force.

It is difficult to imagine individual states signing off on a rapid-deployment force where they may lose command and control of their own forces. If the interests of the state are not met, it is unimaginable that states will allow their forces to assist in a particular mission. No doubt, the United Nations needs international help in its credible, but difficult, peacekeeping, peace enforcement and humanitarian roles. Due to increasing demands being placed on the United Nations, the Secretary General has asked regional organizations outside of Europe to share in the peacekeeping burden. Because the members of these organizations have different goals and interests, the participation of other organizations will be limited, unless it specifically suits their purposes. In addition, regional organizations have limited resources and

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<sup>21</sup> Richard K. Betts, "The Delusion of Impartial Intervention," *Foreign Affairs*, 73 (November/December 1994): 30.

<sup>22</sup> Davis 15-16.



experience in controlling violence.<sup>23</sup> The resources of the United Nations itself are stretched thin. The United Nations Under Secretary of Humanitarian Affairs, in reference to Somalia, complained that for every ten dollars spent on protection forces, only one dollar was going to the aid itself.<sup>24</sup> Given current funding and costs involved, one must consider whether the entire eleven dollars could have been better spent elsewhere. I certainly do not want to imply that Somalia was not worth the effort; after all the United States and the United Nations created many of their own problems. What is evident, though, is that we cannot afford to keep blundering in any of these operations, and the ratio of protection dollars to aid dollars should be better than ten to one, or we should find other starving mouths to feed. There is no easy solution to the United Nations' challenges. However, if the United States is going to remain engaged in the international scene, it must take the lead in helping the United Nations set a new direction. Clearly the United States will not undertake operations that are not in its national interest, nor should it use force in operations where it has no mandate to broker change. What is equally clear is that the member states of the United Nations, or any other multinational organization, increasingly will have difficulty in reaching consensus among its members to solve international problems. The United States will need to take the lead in brokering consensus, through organizations like the United Nations, when it suits its purposes. This will be a considerable challenge, for the United States' selectivity in intervention may not meet with the approval of the other members of the United Nations.

#### **PLACING LIMITS ON INTERVENTION CONTRIBUTES TO FAILURE**

Post Cold War intervention presents problems for any organization. Uncovered by the break-up of the former Soviet Union were many diverse nations forced to live together under oppressive regimes, and still others separated by decades-old ethnic cleansing. A nationalistic resurgence has surfaced with a vengeance, bringing with it centuries of hate and distrust that cannot be solved by interlopers who do not understand and cannot appreciate the nature of the conflict. The central question in many of these

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<sup>23</sup> Davis 21-22.

<sup>24</sup> Stephen P. Riley, "War and Famine in Africa," Conflict Studies, 268 (February 1994): 22.

conflicts is which nations should have their own countries.<sup>25</sup> Parties that will shun any decision not to their satisfaction will face anybody intervening in an attempt to decide these matters. If an intervention was intended to make peace, it would fail because one of the parties to war would be better served by a potential military victory than by a disadvantageous peaceful settlement.

United Nations peacekeeping operations in countries weary of war is made possible by cooperation among major powers. Peacekeeping is a viable mission and recognition of success is easier than in peace enforcement. For peacekeeping to work, all parties to the conflict must willingly accept a peaceful solution. They will do this because the price of continued fighting has become too high in either blood or money, and no increased advantage is expected from continued fighting. Peacekeeping will work when the belligerents have decided that the war failed to accomplish their goals, but they cannot or will not find a peaceful solution on their own. The problem with most conflicts is that the conditions that make international response possible do not exist. The violence stems from ethnic and religious groups seeking independence, where political solutions do not exist. In most cases the belligerents are unwilling to cease fighting short of achieving their goals.<sup>26</sup> A viable international response is possible only with an international consensus to terminate the fighting by choosing a side and using whatever force is necessary.

When peace enforcement is required, as when the parties to a conflict do not desire to terminate fighting, the military component that the United Nations is typically able to muster cannot enforce peace. The United Nations is not designed to conduct military operations. It is an instrument to express the will of the international community.<sup>27</sup> That will can manifest itself by an expression from the General Assembly or by a call for action from the Security Council. A call for action as differentiated from a decisive action to end violence are, more often than not, two different things. The will of the international community can support humanitarian operations where no objections to the intervention arise. Imposing a peace on the former Yugoslavia, for example, proves much more vexing. Two reasons account for the difficulty in forcing a peace. First, the United States and the United Nations desire to limit the

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<sup>25</sup> Mandelbaum 6.

<sup>26</sup> Davis 1-2.

intervention for political reasons. In the case of the United States, popular will would be lacking for increased intervention without a vital interest at stake. The United Nations does not possess the capabilities for strong decisive intervention. It reflects the desires of the world community, but is also limited in its action by the support its members provide. Second, imposing peace would mean choosing sides, and that is not an appealing prospect.

Limits placed on intervention also limit the options available to peacemakers and peacekeepers. Limits on peacekeepers should not pose a problem as long as the belligerents continue to believe that the rewards of continued peace are greater than the rewards of a renewed war. Limits on a peace enforcement force, which is what the United Nations, NATO, and the United States are trying to do in Bosnia-Herzegovina, places them at increased risk, does not contribute to peace among forces desiring to continue the fight, and "[s]ince the end of the Cold War unleashed [the United States and the United Nations] to intervene in civil conflicts around the world...they have unwittingly prolonged suffering where they meant to relieve it."<sup>28</sup>

In the former Yugoslavia, there are inconsistencies in United Nations thinking. The United Nations sought to prevent a Serbian victory, but failed to fully support Muslims and Croats. Preventing the victory of the Serbs while not supporting Muslim or Croatian actions that would improve their position simply drags out the conflict. The United Nations finds it outrageous that the Serbs are interfering in humanitarian efforts of United Nations forces. A siege on a city is an act of war; attempting to break the siege is equally aggressive. When the United Nations mission is humanitarian delivery of food to the besieged, the aggressor will undoubtedly interfere with humanitarian relief in support of their own cause.<sup>29</sup> Peacekeeping forces are not keeping the peace, they are exacerbating the problem. Their humanitarian intervention is not backed by the force required to make peace and standards of humanity are being applied to a situation where the belligerents do not recognize humanitarian concerns. Sun Tzu said there are five qualities that are dangerous in the character of a general. One is that "[i]f he is of a

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<sup>27</sup> Mandelbaum 10.

<sup>28</sup> Betts 20.

compassionate nature you can harass him.”<sup>30</sup> The United Nations peacekeeping forces fit this description, and Sun Tzu has predicted accurately that they are subject to harassment.

Logic is missing from intervention in the former Yugoslavia. The United Nations and NATO, on behalf of the Bosnian government, used limited retaliatory air raids against Serbian positions. Illogically this was done while refusing to let the Bosnians buy arms to support themselves.<sup>31</sup> If the United Nations wants to support the Bosnian government, it would be wise to supply them with the arms with which they can defend themselves. If the United Nations is not supporting the Bosnian government, then why attack Serbian positions? Trying to defend our involvement is difficult when viewed in this perspective. It is no wonder, despite the cries for intervention to prevent human suffering, that the United States and the world community do not pursue actions that would lead to deeper involvement. We are not willing to choose a side. In the former Yugoslavia, continued fighting, rather than peace, better serves the Bosnian Serbs’ goals; therefore peacekeeping is not possible and it cannot succeed until some condition changes. That condition will lead to all parties being ready to stop their fighting. A mere presence will not create that required condition that acts as a catalyst for change. Action, in the form of overwhelming force, by the intervening agent or one of the belligerents initiates the change. Making peace in the former Yugoslavia involves operations that the United States military is not eager to undertake, as they would detract from a primary mission of training for combat, and success would be questionable and casualties likely.<sup>32</sup>

While we can argue that the Gulf War succeeded in eliminating the final vestiges of the Vietnam syndrome, Somalia has shown that we continue to misapply military might, thinking the war we want to fight is the one the enemy will embrace. “In Somalia, the United States succeeded laudably in relieving starvation. Then, fearful that food supply would fall apart again after withdrawal, Washington took on the mission of restoring civil order. [Taking this action without a well thought out plan], stopped short of

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<sup>29</sup> Betts 24-25.

<sup>30</sup> Sun Tzu, The Art of War, trans. and ed. Samuel B. Griffith (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 115.

<sup>31</sup> Betts 25.

<sup>32</sup> Davis 14.

taking charge and imposing a settlement....<sup>33</sup> Taking actions against warlords may be viable if a democratic government desires our support, but when the warlords are, or might be, the only legitimate government available, on whose behalf are we fighting? The action was taken in haste, was limited, and had no clearly defined end state or objective. Are those whose suffering we were trying to relieve better off now than they would have been if we had tried to legitimize a government of Mohammed Farah Aidid, and attempted to build democratic principles in his organization? If the answer is no, then the intervention in Somalia was a failure and should have been substituted with legitimization of one of the warlords, or the use of unlimited military intervention and subsequent nation building, or no intervention at all.

Even when sides are chosen as they were in Haiti, suffering can be prolonged if the intervention is limited, as are economic and political sanctions.<sup>34</sup> Although, economic and political sanctions may be preferred in some cases, we must recognize that they will drag out the conflict. The tally sheet must weigh the advantages and disadvantages of this type of non military intervention, and when and what the next step will be if it fails to elicit the desired response.

Knowing what outcome is desired is critical to any intervention. Knowing the requirements of the end state will determine if a limit on intervention is feasible or whether it will simply muddy the waters. Placing a priority on finding justice or ending killing is also required. If justice is required in peace enforcement, then stopping the killing cannot be the first priority. The conflict may be extended, causing more casualties, so that justice may be served. If stopping the killing is the first priority, then justice may not necessarily be served as the party intervening may support, with force, the stronger belligerent to end the violence quickly.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Betts 26.

<sup>34</sup> Betts 27.

<sup>35</sup> Betts 32.

## IMPARTIALITY IS OFTEN MISPLACED

Conflicts are strung out in an attempt to remain impartial. Although peacekeeping efforts have met with some success, other types of conflict face serious obstacles. As mentioned earlier, in many cases the conflict is about power and which faction has the power. If an impartial United Nations peace effort fails to support a faction unwilling to relinquish or share power, then the conflict continues.<sup>36</sup> When impartiality is successful, it is usually after the belligerents have worn themselves out over fighting and are looking for an honest broker to negotiate a settlement. Such was the case between Iran and Iraq and in Cambodia. Where a decision supporting peace is not made, impartiality in intervention is not likely to work to anyone's advantage.<sup>37</sup>

Impartiality works in peacekeeping but often will fail in peace enforcement. When one or more of the parties to a dispute would rather continue hostile actions to achieve its goals, being impartial merely acts as a buffer, but usually will not terminate the conflict. In peace enforcement, the peace enforcement force must weigh in with overwhelming superiority and impose an unwanted peace on all parties. Two problems exist with this approach today. First, the United Nations and the United States appear not to recognize that peace enforcement forces must fight with overwhelming superiority. This means imposing peace by force, resulting in death and destruction, which runs counter to their apparent mandate. Second, and more practically, the United Nations, as the vehicle of the international conscience and will, does not possess such a force. Peacekeeping, on the other hand, has been successful where the parties involved in the fighting want peace, but do not trust each other to achieve it without help.<sup>38</sup> Here impartiality can work because peace is the desired outcome for all parties in the conflict. Also, the intervention does not require overwhelming force because conditions exist where the role of the peacekeeper is more that of a mediator and monitor of the peace, and force is not required. If events change to the extent that force is contemplated, the situation requires reevaluation.

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<sup>36</sup> Davis 7.

<sup>37</sup> Betts 28.

<sup>38</sup> Mandelbaum 10.

If a policy of impartiality in intervention means that both sides will be prevented from losing the war, then an ending to the war is being prevented, and more carnage will result.<sup>39</sup> This appears to be what the United Nations, NATO, and the United States are accomplishing in the former Yugoslavia. Certainly one can argue that they are simply trying to limit innocent casualties, appeal to the warring factions to negotiate a settlement, and find a peaceful solution. Here we see that a party in the conflict would rather continue fighting to achieve its goals than accept a peace that fails to achieve a desired outcome. The breakup of the former Soviet Union, and its many satellite nations, has unleashed many nationalistic emotions. Nowhere is this more evident than in the former Yugoslavia. Serbian atrocities have gained the most international attention, yet history shows that no party is totally without blame.<sup>40</sup>

International policy is dragging out the conflict in the name of humanitarian intervention. There is no easy solution. Remaining engaged with a flawed interventionist policy will accomplish nothing. Disengagement at this point will give the perception (erroneously) that the United States, United Nations and NATO place a higher priority on state wealth and Western culture than on innocent human life. Eventually there will be a solution. Either one party will win the war or all sides will tire of fighting and agree to peaceful negotiations. In Yugoslavia it will most likely be the latter, as long as peacekeeping forces remain in place. The important point is, when they tire of fighting, we will be doing ourselves a disservice to allow the American people to believe that our policy in Yugoslavia was instrumental to a peaceful solution. The warring factions will eventually tire of fighting whether we are there or not. We certainly do not need to build on "successes" like those that may be forthcoming in Yugoslavia.

Consider the following point that highlights a flaw in our intentions and distorts the perception we would like to convey. In attempting to limit the conflict, the United Nations military commander threatened the Bosnian government with military action if it violated a weapons exclusion zone around Sarajevo. Yet in protecting the civilian population of Sarajevo, the United Nations had authorized air strikes against the Serbian forces shelling Sarajevo. The United Nations is seen as vacillating between

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<sup>39</sup> Betts 32.

<sup>40</sup> Davis 9.

taking no military action in its peacekeeping role and threatening to take action against both belligerents simultaneously.<sup>41</sup> This apparent conflict in policy opens the door to all those who question and criticize our involvement in humanitarian or peacekeeping efforts. Perhaps it is a credit to our benevolence that we are compelled to become involved in the first place, but both the United States and the United Nations "...are skewing the outcomes terribly by dealing in inept half measures."<sup>42</sup>

## WHY INTERVENTION SUCCEEDS OR FAILS

In this discussion of intervention, we talk of interests or vital interests. Part of the problem we face when making a decision to intervene is determining whether any interest of the United States is at stake to compel intervention. The presumption is if there is no interest, there should be no intervention. Is there a difference between an interest and a vital interest? For the sake of argument, I would like to define a vital interest as one in which the United States stands to lose its human or material assets. A vital interest is one where armed intervention is probably contemplated. An interest then might be where the United States loses prestige, world support, global influence, or similar nonspecific aspects of power. Armed intervention may be excessive in a situation where our interests are at stake. As with anything else, in defining what an interest is, there are gray areas where agreement may be difficult to attain. For example, the domino theory explained our involvement in Vietnam. There would probably be diverse opinion on whether Vietnam was a vital interest, according to my definition, or not, yet over 50,000 Americans died fighting in Vietnam. Public opinion would fail to support 50,000 American casualties for anything less than a vital interest.

Staking involvement on human rights abuse and expansion of democracy proves troublesome since invariably no vital national interest is at stake. Americans are reluctant to act unless they feel themselves directly threatened.<sup>43</sup> Having relinquished their voice over a war in Vietnam, Americans are careful to ensure that the political leadership does not embroil the United States in a conflict that we

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<sup>41</sup> Betts 25.

<sup>42</sup> Georgie Anne Geyer, "Walking too Softly," Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, 50 (July/August 1994): 4.

<sup>43</sup> Smith 44.



cannot win. One question we can ask is, are the Armed Forces of the United States the correct organization to send into humanitarian operations? Why not the Peace Corps, or Health and Human Services, or the State Department? The probable answer is that it is simply convenient to send in the Armed Forces. They are available, can get there, and, if escalation is desired, they are already on the scene. Because we send the Armed Forces instead of the Peace Corps, the public is less likely to support intervention for humanitarian reasons. Perhaps it is realistic to assume that, since we do not call on other agencies to support purely humanitarian intervention, our intentions are not purely humanitarian in nature. Defining our objectives are as important in humanitarian intervention as they are in war. Without defining the objective, we have no measure from which to base success or failure.

### **DEFINING THE OBJECTIVE**

Defining the objective is also critical to the success of any peace operation. For many people and cultures around the world, war and violence are legitimate means of righting past wrongs. Religious, political and nationalistic goals that were suppressed in the past are now exploding to the surface with violence.<sup>44</sup> If the United States or the world community through the United Nations is going to intervene in these events, they must be certain to have a clear idea of what their objective is and what is at stake. Presented with a potential intervention, decision makers must analyze factors inherent to the intervention, such as geography, sources of political power, interests, and reactive will. This analysis takes place to determine if the United States can attain its objective militarily and to determine if attainment is worth the expected cost.<sup>45</sup> If public reaction and political response are a measure of the worthiness of intervention, not all recent interventions were worth the resulting cost. "An intervention that can be stopped in its tracks by a few dozen fatalities, like the U.S. operation in Somalia was, is one that should never have begun."<sup>46</sup> At least, it should not have begun without a clear understanding of what the objective was and to what extent we would have been willing to go to achieve the objective.

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<sup>44</sup> Davis 9.

<sup>45</sup> Carl R. Graham, "A Democratic Call to Arms: Public Opinion and Intervention Policy," (Thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA, 1991), 31.

<sup>46</sup> Betts 31.

Whether Somalia served any United States interest or not is debatable. In Somalia a United States led intervention served, or attempted to serve, strictly humanitarian purposes. International forces came five months later. Undoubtedly the United States' food convoys saved thousands of Somali lives.<sup>47</sup> Under what circumstances should the United States initiate, unilaterally, intervention that threatens no American lives? The answer certainly should not be simply because the media starts to broadcast from that location. The American public must be mature enough to realize that the media should not drive political decisions. If intervention is to occur, the public must understand the cost and risk in specific terms; the President has the responsibility to intervene, if at all, under the most favorable conditions for the United States, and the American public should have the opportunity to endorse the decision. This is in no way intended to limit the President's authority to intervene anytime and anywhere in support of real or perceived national interests.

In order to determine whether we are succeeding or failing in any intervention, we must define the objective. The objective is going to vary depending on the type of intervention in progress. The objective in peacekeeping cannot be the same objective as one considered for a war. Military action has traditionally involved the use of force between specific combat units in order to compel one side to surrender its goal in the face of potential or actual death and destruction. Humanitarian and peacekeeping efforts often involve striving to change behavior or overcome the internal failure of government to provide its citizens a minimum level of subsistence.<sup>48</sup> Although the military is well versed in defining objectives to compel an adversary to submit to its will, it is less familiar with guiding a government through a behavioral change, without assuming control of the government.

"To many observers, the United States seems to lack a clear sense of purpose in the post-Cold War world."<sup>49</sup> This lack of purpose complicates making a decision about the real interests of the United States. No longer is the answer as obvious as it was when the Soviet Union was the focus of our energy. After the Cold War, there no longer appears to be a reason for American intervention. However, in

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<sup>47</sup> "The Somali Spectre," Economist, 1 October 1994, 20.

<sup>48</sup> Long 5.

relieving the suffering of civilians, televised into American homes, through humanitarian intervention, the United States had found a new post Cold War mission. These operations rely on United States' military logistic network, not firepower.<sup>50</sup> Without a clear picture of the desired end state after intervention, the military is powerless to solve any problems other than temporary famine or medical relief. This failure is because we undertake a humanitarian or peacekeeping effort, when what may be called for is a "hands off" policy or peace enforcement, with all the force it entails. In deciding to "force" peace, we must decide who is left in power when peace is established, and we must recognize that destruction of life and property is probably required to make the peace.<sup>51</sup> Humanitarian intervention and peacekeeping usually fail to establish a satisfactory end state, because these operations assume a satisfactory one is already in place. The resurgence of ethnicism or nationalism will continue to test the ability of peace operations to quiet all those "...groups who have felt themselves submerged in an alien sovereignty."<sup>52</sup> Civil wars have played a role in the formation of states and the rise of their sovereignty. However, "...if every claimant to the right to autonomy won out, we would effectively witness the devolution of state structures...[with] tiny self-centered polities [replacing] centralized states."<sup>53</sup> Although it is completely natural, what Westerners fail to accept is that wars are great mediators. Rather than artificially suppress anger, or impose a settlement, as peace enforcement does, war allows the belligerents to test forces and wills so that one may be victorious, and another defeated or give up when the cost of the violence comes at too high a price. In this way an end state is determined that is accepted by all parties, based on the outcome of the conflict.

#### **DETERMINING THE END STATE**

Determining the end state of an intervention is as important as defining the objectives. While an objective can be attained, unless we define the desired end state, the intervention may ultimately fail. For

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<sup>49</sup> Steven Metz, "Deterring Conflict Short of War," Strategic Review, XXII (Fall 1994): 49.

<sup>50</sup> Mandelbaum 4.

<sup>51</sup> Betts 30.

<sup>52</sup> Coral Bell, "The Fall and Rise of the United Nations," The United Nations and Crisis Management: Six Studies, ed. Coral Bell, (Canberra: The Australian National University, 1994), 20.

<sup>53</sup> Bruce D. Porter, War and the Rise of the State, (New York: The Free Press, 1994), 300-301.

example, in Somalia the objective may have been to relieve starvation. However, without thinking out in advance which Somali government would prevail, and without getting their support, the intervention as a whole was not successful. Perhaps Somalia is better off than if there had been no intervention, but it is less well off than if a desired end state to sustain progress had been achieved. If it is not clear which belligerent should rule after the fighting is over, then it may not be wise to intervene.<sup>54</sup>

Being willing to define end states most likely entails deciding who will retain power when the fighting is over. For most members of the international community, power does not reside in a single national government entity, but in multiple, competing sources all attempting to expand their degree of influence.<sup>55</sup> Even among Western countries this is the case, but, although there is competition for power, there are limits of power and the power of certain offices carries recognition. The stability of the government remains intact while individual members or factions compete for influence in government. In a less stable environment, the political factions are fighting for legitimacy and control of the government. In these less than stable environments, keeping the peace involves honoring the goals of the warring parties, most of which are searching for political legitimacy and, in some cases, independence. We cannot extend independence to all belligerents without causing international chaos.<sup>56</sup> This presents a problem, as in some cases it appears that nothing short of independence is acceptable to these parties. If the peacemakers wish to ensure peace before the killing erupts in full, they must act forcefully by either bringing their power to bear in support of one party or forcing both into concessions. A gradual approach will only confuse issues and drag out a conflict.<sup>57</sup> In either case, however, the peace may only be a tentative one that will prevail only while the peacemaker continues to threaten with superior force.

Any intervention which involves the United States must balance the political concerns with the military ones. If intervention is in support of a government that does not express the will of the people, or the political system lacks popular support, the effort may fail, as did the effort in Vietnam. Intervention is

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<sup>54</sup> Betts 30-31.

<sup>55</sup> Davis 9.

<sup>56</sup> Davis 10.

<sup>57</sup> Betts 31.

more likely to be successful when in support of a legitimate political system.<sup>58</sup> Although a final verdict may take years, the recent events in Haiti appear to support this opinion. At this time it seems that the people of Haiti were not supportive of the General Raoul Cedras' dictatorship, and that Jean-Bertrand Aristide's government had the popular support of the people. In supporting the Aristide government the United States and the United Nations made a determination of the end state. There was clear support for one government over another, and anything less than success was unacceptable. Although events in Haiti did not require a military invasion, all indications are that, had it occurred, it would have had the support of a majority of the Haitian population. The improvement in living conditions for the people will likely determine any long term support for the government in Haiti.

There was considerable discussion in the media and among politicians, government officials and the military regarding the interest served versus the success of intervention in Haiti. If protection of our shores is in the national interest, then an appropriate response in Haiti is an invasion to return democracy to the country and end the embargo. It is then possible, with a clear conscience, to send home Haitian refugees.<sup>59</sup> The desired end state was to create a stable democratic government in Haiti, so as to stop the flood of Haitian refugees. Viewed from this perspective the intervention in Haiti did contain a clear vision of the desired end state.

Critics of United States' foreign policy argue that the flow of refugees was the result of embargoes. These same people, who may advocate uninterrupted relations to dictatorships that usurp power illegitimately, do not value the freedom they have to express these very same opinions. The flood of refugees to the United States was not caused by any United States foreign policy, but by the irresponsibility of dictators in Haiti, Cuba or elsewhere who have caused utter despair within their people. In order to control its own borders, the United States may act legitimately using economic pressure, diplomatic pressure or military force if necessary to provide relief.<sup>60</sup> Although we have been down this

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<sup>58</sup> Sam C. Sarkesian, "American Policy and Low-Intensity Conflict: An Overview," U.S. Policy and Low-Intensity Conflict, ed. Sam C. Sarkesian and William L. Scully, (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1981), 8.

<sup>59</sup> Elliott Abrams, "Haiti, Here We Come," National Review, 13 June 1994, 27.

<sup>60</sup> Smith 42-43.

Haiti road before, it remains to be seen whether there can be any lasting solution this time. If intervention in Haiti proves successful in the long run then a new framework for United States - Latin American relations based on human rights and democracy is possible.<sup>61</sup>

While we can define objectives and end states, it is still determining a national interest that drives a decision on intervention. Governments have chosen to stand aside where no vital interests were at stake and costs of intervention were high.<sup>62</sup> Especially in peace enforcement, vital interests must exist for there to be popular support of intervention. Peace enforcement is more costly than Americans desire. Since Vietnam, Americans prefer a surgical aspect to intervention, when what is required in peace enforcement is long and costly involvement to make a subtle change.<sup>63</sup>

#### **DEFINING SUCCESS**

Without a clearly defined objective and end state desired, success will be hard to define. This thought gets back to identifying the cause of an intervention. Humanitarian interventions and peace enforcement may be the hardest for which to define success. Relieving human suffering or forcing a peaceful resolution mean nothing unless we can identify and eliminate the root cause of the problem. In multinational operations deciding the cause and defining a solution are as varied as the many nations and their interests allow. Obtaining the forces to intercede also presents problems in multilateral operations. The international community has as much trouble enforcing its decisions, and finding the means to enforce its decisions, as it has deciding the most desirable ends.<sup>64</sup>

A decision not to intervene in a conflict or humanitarian action is as critical as the decision to intervene. As in the decision to intervene, the intention of the United States or international community is subject to questioning, a decision not to intervene may infer disinterest in the conflict. Any decision must be made with full knowledge of how it may be interpreted by the adversaries. An incorrect decision on

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<sup>61</sup> Smith 36.

<sup>62</sup> Davis 10.

<sup>63</sup> Mandelbaum 12.

<sup>64</sup> Mandelbaum 9.

intervention because of implied disinterest is the same as a failure of an intervention effort. There is a risk that if ethnic groups are successful in violent conflicts or if the international community fails to respond, violence may gain legitimacy as a form of gaining power and resolving disputes. Although this has no immediate impact on the interests of most Western cultures, if the level of violence grows excessively, it may.<sup>65</sup> As some emerging nations carve out their niche in the world, other groups may choose conflict believing "that the political or economic status quo does not give their group adequate opportunities to realize [their] collective aspirations."<sup>66</sup> The success of intervention is as much a function of attaining objectives and desired end state as it is a function of the decision to intervene in a conflict, if that intervention is one the global community perceives as necessary.

With the decision to intervene as critical as achieving the defined goals of intervention, the assets necessary to achieve success must back up the decision. As we have already addressed, the United Nations is subject to the support and whims of its membership. Since the United States is the sole superpower, it is incumbent upon us to ensure that any action the United Nations does take gets the level of support it requires. Without the support required for the intervention, the result will be the aggravation of the situation and a delay of resolution. Even though the intervention may ultimately be successful, delaying resolution will impact on the future effectiveness of the United Nations. If our intervention is too weak, it will not be credible. The United States and its allies must be credible in their threats to resolve conflict. If the application of appropriate military force does not follow a threat, then the resulting loss of credibility will encourage other belligerents to test the resolve of Americans, their allies, and their interests.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Davis 11.

<sup>66</sup> W. Phillips Davison, "Application of Opinion Research to Conflict Resolution," Resolving Nationality Conflicts: The Role of Public Opinion Research, eds. W. Phillips Davison and Leon Gordenker, (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1980), 190.

<sup>67</sup> Metz 48.

## LIMITING FAILURE

Even in the aftermath of the successful intervention in the Gulf War, the Vietnam syndrome continues to exist for military and political leaders. Its influence continues to have an impact on political and military strategy, lending a cautious approach to intervention.<sup>68</sup> Had the Gulf War not occurred, American caution in intervention might be even more pronounced than it is today, or as it was when the death of eighteen members of the service in Somalia caused such an outcry that it led to the cancellation of that humanitarian intervention. In Somalia the caution was misplaced; had the policy been thought out in detail beforehand, the anticipated death of service personnel should have led to a decision not to support intervention in Somalia, or to support it with superior firepower in order to limit the risk. The only other alternative would be to accept a level of risk and the corresponding casualties as necessary to achieve worthy goals. Risk in intervention will always be present, regardless of how much money we throw at a problem. If we cannot reduce risk to an acceptable level of comfort, within our budgetary constraints, we should not be inviting ourselves to play the game. This is the most basic question the United States must answer: does it still desire to play in the superpower game? If it does, and it should, it must selectively engage and stay long enough to ensure victory--be that victory feeding people, nation building or defeating an enemy. There are limits to the failures we can accept in this post Cold War world. Whether it is because of lack of will or insufficient firepower, the best time to concede failure is prior to intervention. Resources are not available to emotionally choose intervention without the willingness to give the effort required to ensure success.

One aspect of intervention that Westerners and Americans continually fail to grasp is that we do not have the monopoly on the best way to do things. Just because the thought of killing, death and destruction invades the quiet sanctity of our living rooms, leaving us disgusted at the senselessness of it all, does not mean everyone else feels the same way. In understanding the impact our intervention has on other cultures, we must understand that their view of the world is unique and no less correct. A terrorist or religious fundamentalist that chooses to sacrifice others, or die for a cause, certainly does not subscribe

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<sup>68</sup> Sarkesian 8.



to the same value system that we do.<sup>69</sup> When we intervene thinking only of our moral values, we invite failure by failing to understand that other cultures do not think like us. Until we can understand a conflict from the belligerent's point of view, using their values, we will have limited success. Unless we are willing to approach intervention in this manner, we should consider limiting our failure by limiting the intervention.

Another area where we should consider limiting the failure of intervention is in conflicts where both parties desire to continue fighting. Where belligerents show no desire to stop the conflict, involvement of the international community may serve to expand the war and make any resolution more difficult. The high risk and low reward ratio make the international community reluctant to intervene.<sup>70</sup> Any forced termination of hostilities will be tenuous at best, and will require the use of multinational peace enforcement forces to maintain an uneasy peace. These forces must be of sufficient number and have sufficient firepower to overwhelm both parties. The international community will be reluctant to intervene because it will mean fighting on two fronts, probably resulting in casualties no one is willing to tolerate.

Finally, limiting the failure of intervention will be required in instances where there is no easy solution in peace enforcement efforts. Without a solution, peace enforcers will only maintain peace as long as they remain engaged. Due to either popular pressure or financial constraints there are limits to the length of engagements. Without a solution forthcoming, peace enforcers involved in nationalistic disputes face difficult choices. Nations artificially forced together by consolidations of the past cannot be given their own states by redrawing lines on maps. Many people long ago were forced outside traditional national territories. "[T]o concentrate them would be through the mass transfer of populations, [commonly called ethnic cleansing]."<sup>71</sup> Intervention in this instance does not recognize the wrongs of the past. However, to allow 'ethnic cleansing' to continue is to fail to recognize the wrongs of the present. There are no clear or easy solutions.

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<sup>69</sup> Metz 49.

<sup>70</sup> Davis 10.

## MEASURING SUCCESS

We cannot measure the success of intervention without defining an objective. In addition, peacekeeping, peace enforcement and humanitarian intervention all require long term commitments for permanent relief. Peacekeeping missions can end only when we establish trust between belligerents, so that they can mediate their own truce without resumed fighting. Peace enforcement can end only when the belligerents agree in the face of superior force, either the adversary or interventionist force, that continued fighting is futile. When the superior force withdraws, as will a peace enforcement force, fighting may resume. Finally a humanitarian intervention can end only when we overhaul the infrastructure which led to the failure of the government to provide basic needs. In all three cases, we cannot achieve success unless there is a commitment to see a mission through to completion. In judging our policy in peace operations, we must base intervention on a reasonable expectation of successfully achieving our goals. If intervention cannot alleviate even the most tragic of situations, then it is misplaced and unwarranted. We must develop ways of identifying situations with potential for success.<sup>72</sup>

To achieve success the intervention must achieve a pre-determined end state, and possibly support it in the long term. To be credible the government left in power must have the best interests of all the people at heart, and must have the support of the people. Without both, any peace will not be lasting, and the credibility of those involved in the intervention will be tarnished, affecting their success in future operations. "Peace...[enforcement] will not always cost as much as it did in Korea and Kuwait. The underlying issues, however, are much the same -- who is in charge, and in what pieces of territory, after a war ends."<sup>73</sup>

When intervention occurs in situations that are decaying rapidly or where the warring parties reject outside intervention, a mission of mercy can develop into a prolonged standoff without hope for

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<sup>71</sup> Mandelbaum 8-9.

<sup>72</sup> Long 6.

<sup>73</sup> Betts 33.

success.<sup>74</sup> To be successful, an intervention must make a decisive impact that provides relief and does not complicate the conflict or suffering. Identification of a solution and effective implementation is paramount. Intervention cannot lack power in the name of impartiality. Sometimes we will have to choose sides, which in itself can complicate the intervention and potential solutions. Intervention that portends to be equitable, yet lacks power, will lead to continued fighting because the lack of power cannot prevent it and others will interpret the equity as support for all belligerent positions.<sup>75</sup>

## DECIDING TO INTERVENE

Deciding to intervene is one of the most important decisions we must make. In making this decision we are identifying our interests around the globe and committing resources to influence a situation. In making the decision to intervene, we must answer questions about when, why and how to intervene. Although these are fairly simple questions, the answers will change given the various positions of actors making the decisions.

When to intervene is critical, because early intervention can head off future problems. Intervention too early in a process may involve our limited assets in situations that may find their own solutions in the long run without intervention. In either case, criticism is probable. Consider the following statement:

Washington and New York have responded to rough experiences by remaining mired in indecision and hamstrung by half-measures (Bosnia), facing failure and bailing out (Somalia), acting only after a long period of limited and misdirected pressure (Haiti), or holding back from action where more awesome disaster than anywhere else called for it (Rwanda). To do better in picking and choosing, it would help to be clearer about how military means should be marshaled for political ends.<sup>76</sup>

Looking back at the events in these situations, many would agree with this criticism. But Washington and New York could just as easily be criticized for: Intervention with force favoring one side in Bosnia, redefining the mission and increasing intervention in Somalia, jumping the gun and acting

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<sup>74</sup> John Isaacs, "A Confederation of Caution," Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, 50 (July/August 1994): 15.

<sup>75</sup> Betts 33.

<sup>76</sup> Betts 30.

with force when all diplomatic avenues had not been explored in Haiti, and intervention in Rwanda where there are no vital interests. Hind-sight is a wonderful thing, allowing us to be critical without having to make the hard decisions.

Intervention should come early in any effort for several reasons. First, the sooner we know that intervention is required, the more likely intervention will succeed because the reasons for intervention are in an immature stage. Jumping the gun involves dangers, but so does waiting too long to try to intervene with a perfect solution. Second, early intervention will help eliminate sympathetic players for a particular side jumping into the conflict, causing it to enlarge. Finally, multinational bodies involved in peacekeeping or peace enforcement should issue policy decisions early in an intervention so they do not give the appearance of echoing initiatives already begun by individual nations.<sup>77</sup> Although early intervention is preferable, in cases where intervention is in doubt, it may not be possible. In supporting a position in international affairs, and calling for intervention, the action must be timely with swift follow through or it can be perceived as a weakness. This was evident in the United Nations' and the United States' support for President Jean-Bertrand Aristide of Haiti.<sup>78</sup> However noble the support, it was beset by hesitations that weakened the position of the United States, not only with respect to Haiti but in other areas as well. Intervention was legitimate not necessarily because of who controlled Haiti, but because those in control created conditions that left the borders of the United States vulnerable to unrestricted refugee flows, they promoted instability, ignored democracy and inflicted terror and brutality too close to our shores.<sup>79</sup> Intervention is certainly called for when there is a direct threat to American vital interests. However, inaction in the face of lesser interests can be devastating also. Especially in the post cold-war era where a threat may come from groups that are not states, we must insure our policies do not encourage others to undermine our values.

Why we intervene is a question that has no consistent answer, thus we seem to have no consistent policy. The United States' reasons for unilateral intervention have never been strong except, perhaps, in

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<sup>77</sup> Long 6.

<sup>78</sup> Smith 35.

the Americas. The major threat of the past fifty years, the Soviet Union, even called for multinational intervention in the form of NATO. Even in Vietnam we did not act completely alone, but had allies fighting with us. Requiring a credible world voice to support a global view, the international community looks to the United Nations. The United Nations is the conscience of the international community. It can and does authorize action to promote international norms, be it peacekeeping, humanitarian action, or peace enforcement, but the United Nations lacks the means to execute the action and the member states, despite their compassion, often lack the will.<sup>80</sup>

Governments have been reluctant to become involved in ethnic and religious conflicts that have no political solution and low probability of success. Given the refugee flows and human suffering, we cannot ignore political conflicts. Just how to address these conflicts is in question. Events in the former Yugoslavia are an example of this dilemma. Peacekeeping forces are inadequate to do the job, but peace enforcement and the forces required to achieve peace entail unacceptable risks.<sup>81</sup> Just which events trigger a response is part of the question of why we intervene. In this information intensive world, the media plays a large role in determining intervention by their spin in reporting conflicts and suffering. It may speak poorly for the American public that we believe everything that television presents is important. We can also ask, why is the media the sole arbitrator of morality? Why does Somalia receive coverage, but not Sudan? Why do we build up Bosnia as a cause but play down Rwanda? Is the media really reflective of the public mood or does it set its own agenda?

The reasons that we intervene should be because to do so serves our purposes and supports our interests. For this reason, intervention in Bosnia may be more appropriate than intervention in Rwanda because it impacts relations with Eastern and Western Europe and especially the markets in these locations. Although relieving the horror of human suffering may be a byproduct of intervention, it is not the reason we intervene. If human suffering were the sole determinant of intervention, we would be spread out all over the world. It is too easy to let sympathy guide us when what we need is a vision for

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<sup>79</sup> William Clinton, Presidential Address to the nation regarding the situation in Haiti, 15 September 1994.

<sup>80</sup> Mandelbaum 17.

involvement and stability in the world.<sup>82</sup> "The western state seldom reacts directly to the cries for help of the world's victims, but instead to the calls of public opinion in western and world society...."<sup>83</sup>

Human rights abuses occur daily throughout the globe, but, lacking any clear implication for national security interests, Americans console themselves with humanitarian not military gestures.<sup>84</sup> Where we have found ourselves in over our head is in situations where the humanitarian involvement, carried out by the armed services, has gravitated without articulated reasons towards military intervention. Without articulating the vital interests served, the American public will not support military intervention. In an effort to establish what degree of military support the American public will tolerate, after intervention has already occurred, political vacillation and posturing occur. This vacillation calls into question whether any worthy political goal of vital interest to the United States is being served, further eroding public support. Lacking a national interest, military goals are misplaced. A more difficult question to answer is, do we require a vital interest to establish a military goal? If not, then at the very least we need some clear objectives and the means of achieving a desired end state.

How we intervene is, I think, more of a political question than when and why to intervene. Do we talk softly and carry a big stick, or talk loudly and carry no stick? A humanitarian intervention may use the military only because of its transportation infrastructure and available work force. There may be no requirement or expectation of the use of force. Where conflict exists there are two extremes that would limit casualties as much as possible. Remaining impartial, avoiding the risks of entanglement in a conflict still hotly contested, can be accomplished by avoiding intervention. Another way to limit entanglement is to intervene with overpowering force to subdue all belligerents swiftly and impartially. The belligerents will be swiftly subdued by the impartial use of tremendous force against all sides.<sup>85</sup> The goal is to limit casualties of the intervening force, be it the United Nations, NATO or United States'

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<sup>81</sup> Davis 2.

<sup>82</sup> Long 6.

<sup>83</sup> Martin Shaw, "Forcing the World to Work," New Statesman and Society, 26 August 1994, 23.

<sup>84</sup> Smith 44.

<sup>85</sup> Betts 28.

forces. Anything in-between these two extremes will increase casualties. If we make the decision to intervene, it is important that we base the decision on what we can accomplish and how it can be accomplished. The public will not support policies that are inept and confused, or their weak and incompetent execution.<sup>86</sup>

Intervention is required in many areas. If the United States is willing to take a back seat in establishing intervention policies, it can only blame itself when more radical views prevail. More so than during the cold-war there are entire regions susceptible to influence. If we are unwilling to provide it, we will oblige religious fundamentalists, radical terrorists, or Third World warlords to provide influence. "It is indeed wise to be more selective [in intervention] than in the heady days of hope for collective security that followed the end of the Cold War, but it will be unfortunate if the western powers and the United Nations abandon such missions altogether."<sup>87</sup>

### **DECIDING WHEN NOT TO INTERVENE**

Deciding when not to intervene may be easier to determine than when it is proper to intervene. There is also less emotional attachment to the decision and we can be more objective in making the decision. When there is less at stake and less of a national interest, it is easier to decide that we have no business intervening. Throughout this paper several questions have surfaced that, unless answered satisfactorily, indicate intervention should at least be questioned. One thing is increasingly clear -- a policy that has vision may be one that simply asks the requisite questions to ensure rigor is employed in dispatching forces. Vision in peace operations may be accepting the need for flexibility to adapt to any given situation, that answers the proper questions, indicating that our interests are at stake. What are those questions, and what are the wrong answers that would indicate intervention may be not in our interest?

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<sup>86</sup> Kagan 42.

<sup>87</sup> Betts 27.

## **WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?**

If we do not know what success looks like we are off to a poor start. Of course it will look different in different peace operations. Humanitarian intervention will look as if all the food, medicine, and facilities are in place and supporting the right people. However, it cannot stop there. We cannot quit until the permanent infrastructure is in place to continue these efforts. Did we put a legitimate interim or permanent government in place? Does it legitimately speak for the people? How long does the humanitarian support continue before we feel the recipients should stand on their own? Peacekeeping and peace enforcement have questions that we must answer also. We cannot develop an all inclusive list because each situation will be different. The United States, the United Nations and other states and organizations employ intelligent people who should be able to ask and answer the appropriate questions. The questions must be asked and leaders must demand the answers. If we cannot answer the questions satisfactorily, we should be suspect of intervention. There may be volatile, rapidly changing scenarios where all of the answers are not available immediately. When the answers are ultimately required, they must be staffed with the same rigor given the original questions. Asking and answering all of these questions will determine an end state. If we cannot determine an end state, we should once again question the purpose of our intervention.

## **ON WHAT TERMS SHALL WE INTERVENE?**

After having asked and answered many questions, and determined the end state, we can address the terms of intervention that will promote success. The terms involve the type of forces employed in the intervention as well as the limitations placed upon them. Addressing the terms in this way is valid for all types of peace operations. Intervention should occur only on the terms political leaders, considering the advice of military leaders, are willing to accept. The terms that the will of the people define disassociate decision making from the rigor required in making the decision to commit forces. The will of the people is difficult to gauge. The media serves up its daily dose of what is important as seen through its eyes. The media may influence the will of the people, but does not reflect it. The will of the people is truly only accurately reflected every two or four years at election time. Placing excessive stock in the "will of the



people" subjects rational decision making to consider irrational influences, with single minded focus, desiring us to eliminate all suffering, hunger, dictators, and warlords; yet express outrage if "excessive" force is used, or any innocent civilians are caught in the middle. We cannot have it both ways. If the will of the people alone is the biggest influence for intervention, the success of the intervention may be in jeopardy since we may not ask many of the appropriate questions.

### **ARE LIMITATIONS APPROPRIATE?**

Knowing the requirements of the end state will help to determine whether political or military limitations are feasible in intervention. An end state that we can achieve only through force will be more successful without limits on the use of force. Limitations placed on intervention to achieve a limited objective or supporting a desired end state are appropriate. Limitations placed on intervention as a measure of the popular or political support an action enjoys should be cause for concern. If we place limitations on intervention because an action may not be popular, we should go back to the original question: what should success look like? It is likely we may not know, in which case intervention may not be appropriate.

### **HOW SHOULD WE COMPOSE THE FORCE?**

The composition of the force employed is critical to the success of intervention. If we are taking sides in a peace enforcement effort, then we are going to war with at least one ally. If we are acting impartially in peace enforcement, then we are going to war against two or more enemies, possibly with no allies. If we are engaging in humanitarian operations, do we even need weapons? Is there even such a thing as a purely humanitarian operation, apart from natural disasters? Perhaps not. The collapse of government that leads to human suffering, may indicate political or military leaders with their own self-serving motives. We may require force to overcome these motives and to build an infrastructure (including government) that supports the needs of the people. Former Secretary of Defense Casper Weinberger indicated that the force must be tailored to meet the objective. If we cannot tailor the force in peace operations, it may be one more indicator of potential failure. The composition of the force must be intentional, not incidental.

## **CAN OUR INTERVENTION BRING STABILITY?**

In many cases bringing stability to a particular situation will be beneficial. What we must ask is: how will our intervention enhance stability? We must reserve intervention for those occasions where our support brings stability and promotes our values. Bringing stability to a situation where the parties to war shun peaceful settlement can only be accomplished through overwhelming force. If we do not prepare to provide this force, or if we do not address how to bring stability to a situation, intervention could prove a disaster.

## **HAVE WE USED REASON OR EMOTION IN OUR DECISION MAKING PROCESS?**

Finding an honest answer to this question may prove difficult. We must attempt to reduce the emotion of the decision making process, while around us special interests or the media may be dealing from a position of emotion. We must base intervention on our credibility, not on our emotion. We can attempt to remove the emotion by ensuring we ask the above questions. In addition, we can reduce emotion if we can attempt to understand all points of view, from the regional prospective and not just the United States perspective. We must try to think as they think. If we are swayed, by our emotions, to intervene, what will be our reaction to casualties? Will five, ten or 50 casualties cause an emotional response to terminate involvement? Emotions cannot rule our decisions; if they do we will fail. The death of Americans, however tragic, is not reason enough for the United States to abandon the pursuit of its legitimate goals. If it were, we would all still be British colonists or citizens of the Confederate States of America.

## **CONCLUSION**

Undoubtedly the world is evolving. Our last great enemy, the Soviet Union, along with the United States, enhanced stability in the bi-polar world. The lifting of repression in Eastern Europe, as well as old spheres now open to new influences, has opened the door to new brokers of power. The United States has a role in the new world as do international organizations like the United Nations, but they must base their roles on careful and intelligent decision making. The capability to solve all the world's ills is

not present in any organization. It is not a matter of playing a moral game of who is the recipient of help and who is not. It is simply a matter of where can a finite supply of resources, be they guns, butter, or human beings, be placed to provide maximum benefit to the maximum people.

We may find success elusive and we must attempt to limit our failures, or we will compromise our future involvement. We must be willing to ask questions and be guided by their answers. The questions that will limit our failures, if thoughtful answers are provided, are ones that would highlight deficiencies in our planning. What does success look like? On what terms shall we intervene? Are limitations appropriate? What is the composition of the force? Can we provide stability? Is our decision to intervene based on clear reasoning? Some would find this approach too rigid. They would want the "Haves" to support the "Have nots" without limitation. In reality this will never occur, at least not while states exist as we know them, and nations and ethnic groups fight for independent survival.

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